CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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Message dated 27 January 1966 from Prime Minister Wilson to the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament

The Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee is resuming its activities at a time when, more than ever before, the world community stands in need of, and urgently expects, progress towards the great objective of arms control and disarmament. The British Government consequently welcomes the fact that the Committee has agreed to resume its work so soon after the conclusion of the disarmament debate in the United Nations General Assembly.

By the resolutions adopted at the recent session of the United Nations General Assembly, the nations demonstrated their support for and trust in the Committee. That they did so must be a matter of deep satisfaction to all delegations; it will also I hope be a spur to renewed efforts in the months ahead. The British Government pledges itself to co-operate untiringly in the search for progress.

In accordance with the wishes expressed by the 20th General Assembly of the United Nations, the Committee will be giving urgent consideration to the working out of an agreement to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons. This is by general agreement the most pressing need in the disarmament field. I trust that the two draft non-proliferation treaties before the Committee will provide a basis for serious negotiation in order to resolve the differences that stand in the way of agreement.

The Committee will also continue its search for agreement on arrangements to ban nuclear tests in all environments. This would not only be a most valuable achievement in itself, but would also make a vital contribution to our efforts to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons.

The coming session will, I hope, be marked by fresh efforts to find a basis for a start on real disarmament and also by progress towards a solution of the complex problems involved in an agreement for general and complete disarmament.

I send the Disarmament Committee my best wishes for a constructive and fruitful session.

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